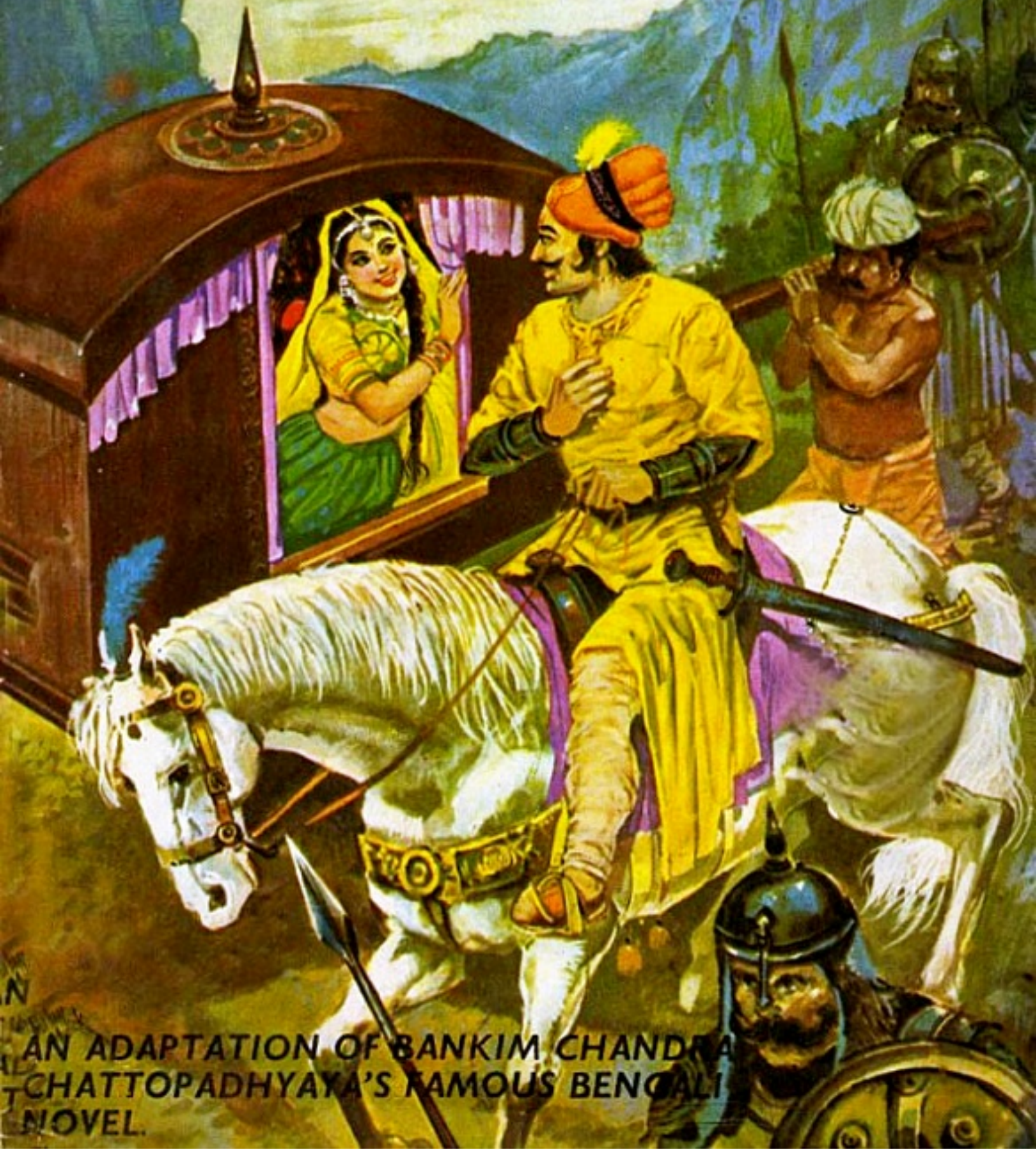


RAJ SINGH



AN ADAPTATION OF BANKIM CHANDRA
CHATTOPADHYAYA'S FAMOUS BENGALI
NOVEL.

Novels by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, although written about a hundred years ago, are still admired all over India, and, as such, need little introduction. Many of his novels have been translated into Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and other regional languages of India. It is said that Ramakrishna Paramahansa liked his novels so much that he had them read out to him. "Vande Mataram", the song which inspired and sustained the brave patriots who fought for our independence, was from one of his historical novels—*Ananda Math*.

In *Raj Singh*, the historical novel from which our Amar Chitra Katha has been adapted, he has tried to be true to the historical characters and incidents which he has depicted. The incidents involving the princess of Roop Nagar are found in Tod's "Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan—Volume I"

One day, a portrait-vendor visits the palace of our heroine, Chanchal Kumari, and tries to sell her a portrait of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor. The princess flings the portrait on the floor and steps on it. The news is carried to Aurangzeb. The events that follow make Raj Singh one of the most interesting stories in our series.

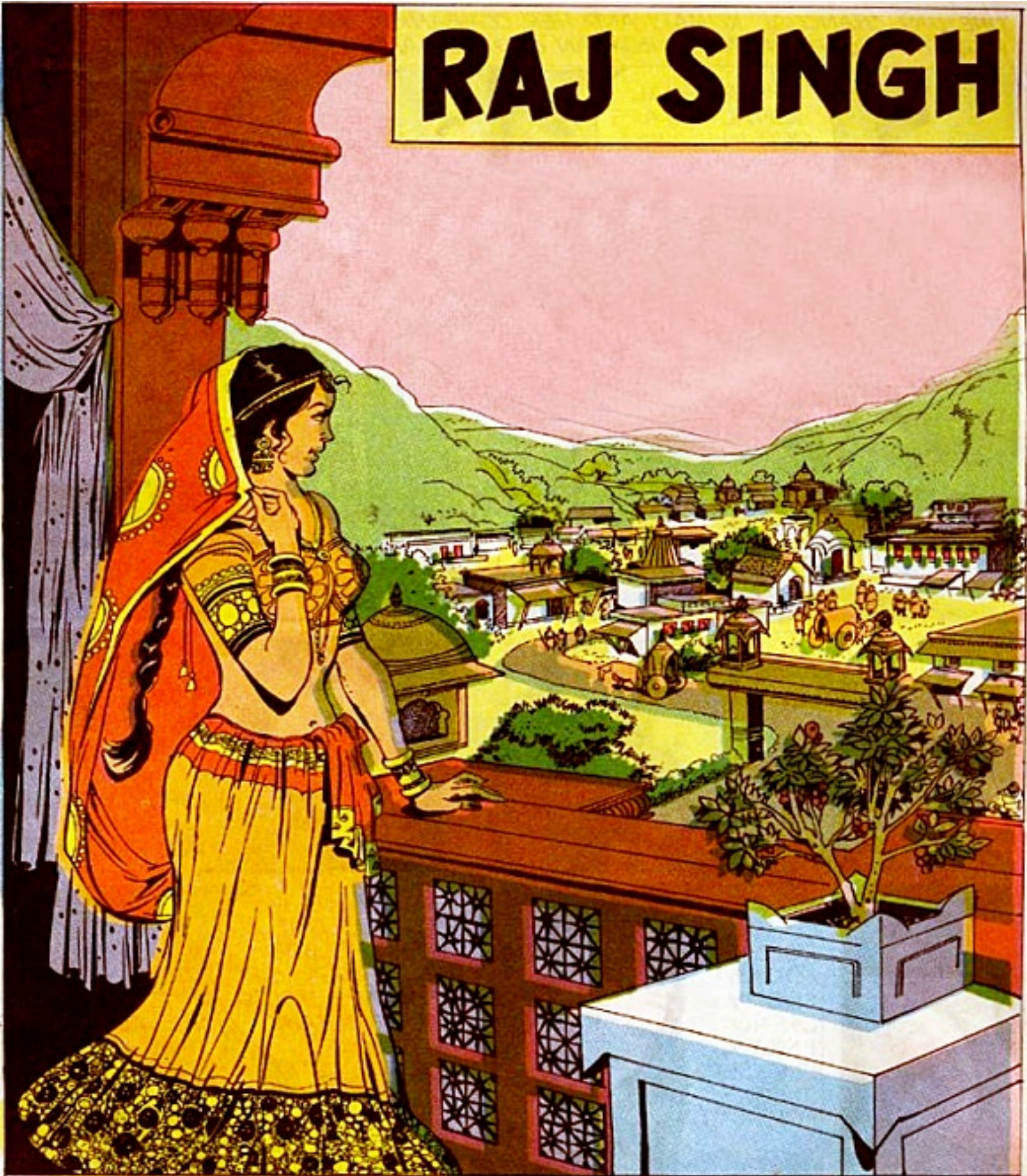
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RAJ SINGH



WHEN AURANGZEB WAS THE EMPEROR OF INDIA, THERE WAS A SMALL STATE IN THE HILLY REGIONS OF RAJASTHAN, KNOWN AS ROOPNAGAR — THE BEAUTIFUL CITY. MORE BEAUTIFUL, HOWEVER, WAS ITS PRINCESS, CHANCHAL KUMARI.

ONE DAY, CHANCHAL KUMARI AND HER COMPANION, NIRMAL KUMARI, WERE BUYING PORTRAITS FROM AN OLD WOMAN DEALER.

THE MUGHAL ROYALTIES ARE OUR IN-LAWS.* WE HAVE DOZENS OF THESE.

SHOW US SOME OF HINDU KINGS.

I'VE ONLY ONE—RANA RAJ SINGH'S. BUT HE IS AN ENEMY OF ROOPNAGAR.

HOW CHIVALROUS HE LOOKS! ENEMY OR NO ENEMY, I'LL KEEP THIS PORTRAIT.

HAVE A LOOK AT THIS ONE. IT'S THE BAD-SHAH ALAMGIR.** PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO TAKE IT TOO.

YES. I'LL TAKE IT.



AFTER SEEING THE OLD WOMAN OFF, A RELIEVED NIRMAL RETURNED TO CHANCHAL.

I, TOO, CAN NOW TAKE THE INCIDENT LIGHTLY.



CHANCHAL, I HAD HOPED TO MARRY THE BADSHAH. BUT YOU HAVE ALREADY TORN HIS HEART TO PIECES AND SPOILT MY CHANCES.

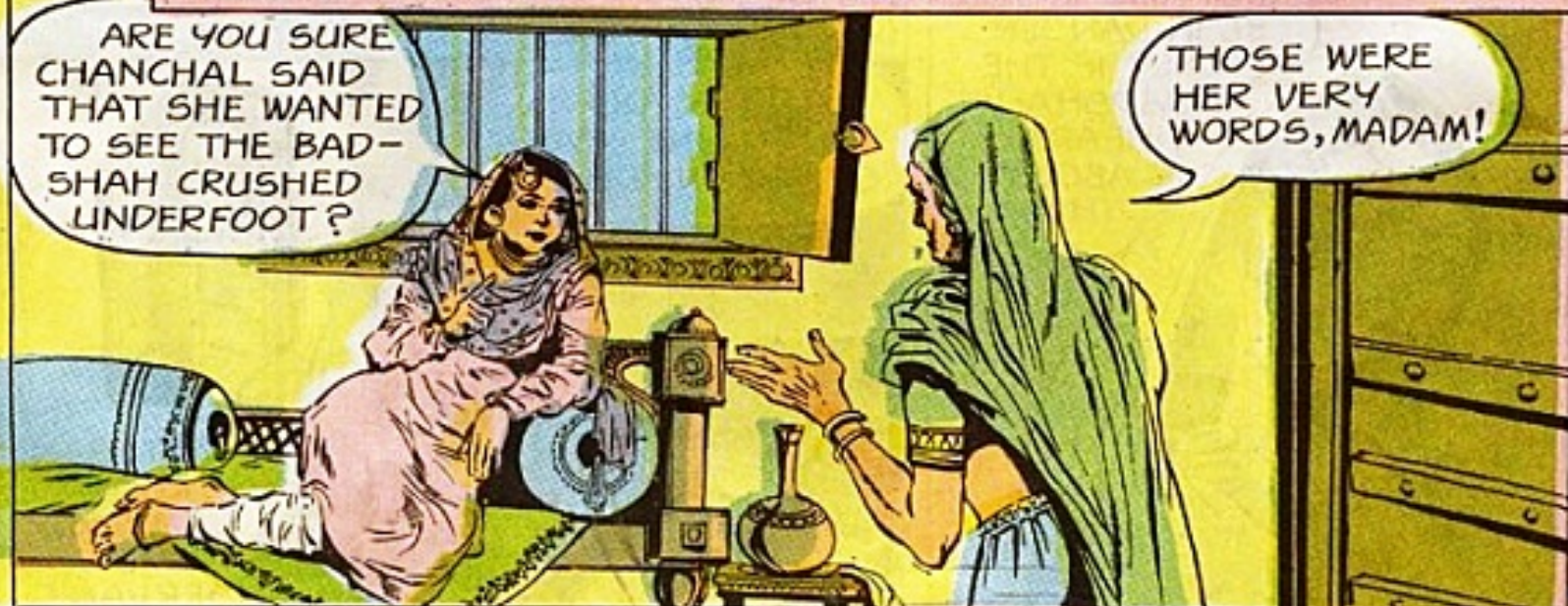
I'M GLAD. I THINK RAJ SINGH IS THE ONLY MAN ANY WOMAN SHOULD WANT TO MARRY.



THE OLD WOMAN, MEANWHILE, HAD NO INTENTION OF KEEPING HER PROMISE. WHEN SHE REACHED DELHI, SHE PROMPTLY SOLD THE NEWS TO DARIA BIBI, WHO PAID HER A TIDY SUM FOR IT.

ARE YOU SURE CHANCHAL SAID THAT SHE WANTED TO SEE THE BADSHAH CRUSHED UNDERFOOT?

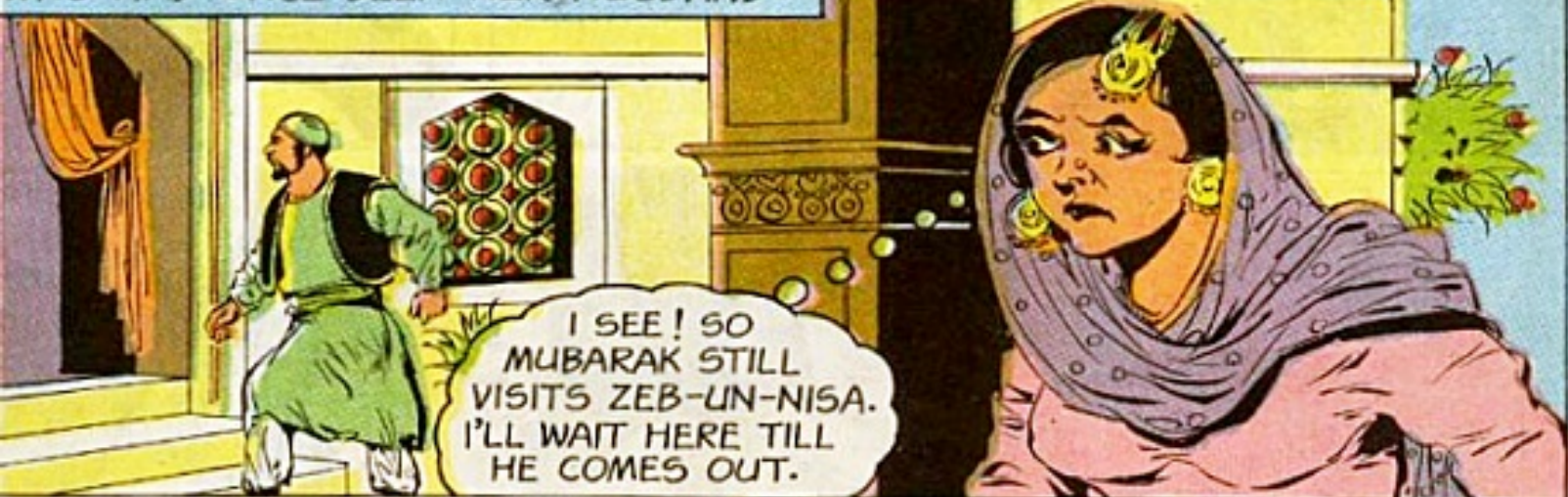
THOSE WERE HER VERY WORDS, MADAM!



AS SOON AS THE OLD WOMAN LEFT, DARIA SET OUT FOR THE PALACE TO MEET AURANGZEB'S DAUGHTER, ZEB-UN-NISA.



OUTSIDE ZEB-UN-NISA'S CHAMBERS, DARIA SAW MUBARAK KHAN, WHO HAD ONCE BEEN HER HUSBAND.



AFTER A WHILE, MUBARAK CAME OUT.



* PRINCESS.

LATER, WHEN DARIA STOOD BEFORE ZEB-UN-NISA —



AND DARIA RELATED THE ROOPNAGAR INCIDENT TO ZEB-UN-NISA.

AN INDIGNANT ZEB-UN-NISA COULD HARDLY WAIT TO TELL HER FATHER ABOUT IT. WHEN SHE HAD FINISHED —



THE INFURIATED BADSHAH WENT TO JODHPURI BEGUM, HIS RAJPUT WIFE.



A FEW DAYS LATER, CHANCHAL'S FATHER, VIKRAM SINGH SOLANKI RECEIVED A LETTER FROM AURANGZEB.

THE BADSHAH WANTS TO MARRY MY DAUGHTER. HE IS SENDING AN ARMY TO ESCORT HER TO DELHI.

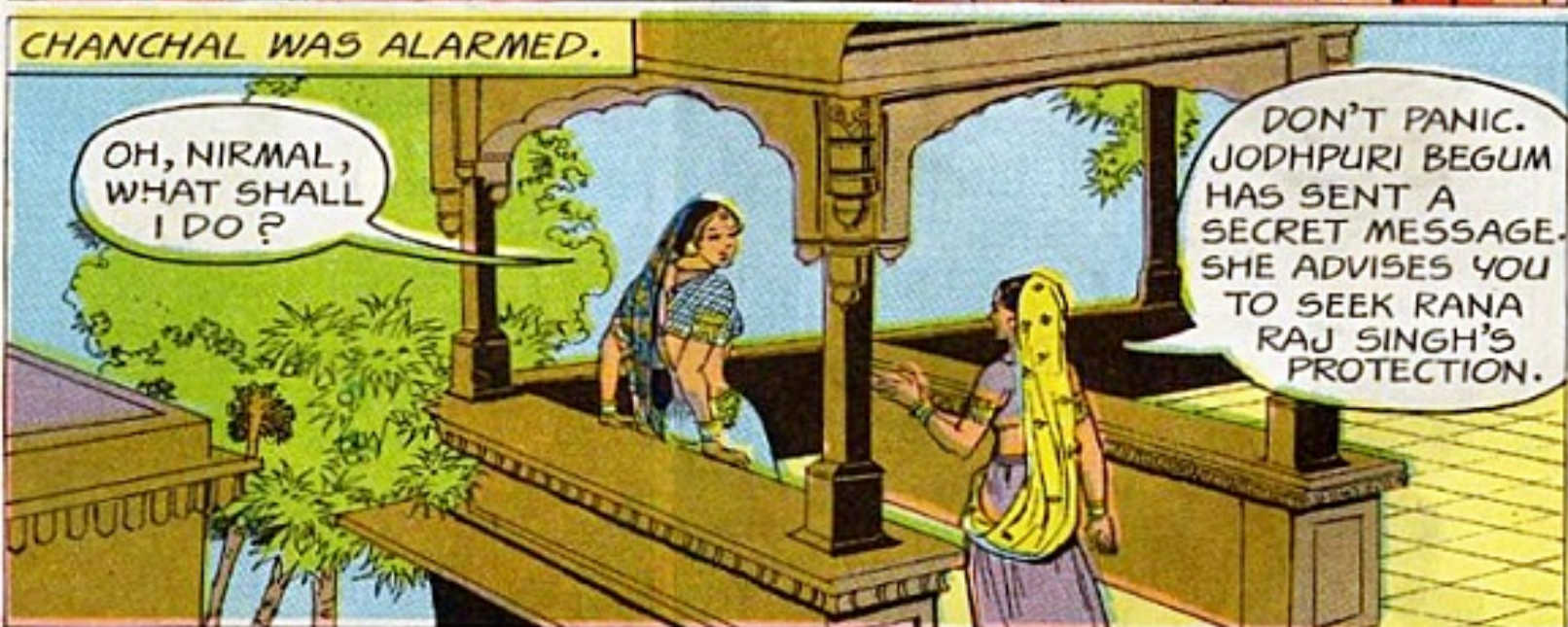
WHAT AN HONOUR!



CHANCHAL WAS ALARMED.

OH, NIRMAL, WHAT SHALL I DO?

DON'T PANIC. JODHPURI BEGUM HAS SENT A SECRET MESSAGE. SHE ADVISES YOU TO SEEK RANA RAJ SINGH'S PROTECTION.



SHE ALSO SAYS THAT YOU MUST ASK THE RANA TO MAKE UDIPURI WAIT ON YOU. LET US SEND A MESSAGE TO THE RANA.

YES. ONLY THAT WORTHY DESCENDANT OF SANGRAM AND PRATAP* CAN SAVE ME NOW.



* FAMOUS RAJPUT HEROES.

THAT VERY DAY, A MESSENGER LEFT ROOPNAGAR WITH CHANCHAL'S LETTER TO RAJ SINGH. ON THE WAY, HOWEVER, HE WAS ATTACKED BY DACOITS.



MEANWHILE RAJ SINGH, WHO HAD COME TO HUNT IN THE FORESTS NEAR BY, HAD WANDERED AWAY FROM HIS MEN, TO THE TOP OF A HILL. WHAT HE SAW MADE HIM BRING HIS HORSE TO A HALT.



HE THUNDERED DOWN THE HILL. BUT BY THE TIME HE REACHED THE SPOT, THE DACOITS HAD FLED. HE UNTIED THE MAN. THEN —



MEANWHILE, THE DACOITS HAD ENTERED A CAVE NEAR BY TO SHARE THEIR BOOTY.

NOW WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS LETTER?

MANIKLAL CAN READ AND WRITE. LET HIM READ IT OUT.



MANIKLAL READ OUT THE LETTER. THEN—

LET'S GIVE IT TO THE RANA. HE WILL REWARD US.

FOOL. WE'RE DACOITS. HE'LL KILL US. LET'S SELL IT TO THE BADSHAH.



AT THAT MOMENT, RAJ SINGH ENTERED. WITHIN MINUTES HE KILLED BOTH OF THEM. WHILE HE TURNED TOWARDS MANIKLAL, THE FOURTH DACOIT RAN AWAY.







THE RANA WITH HIS FIFTY MEN WAITED ON TOP OF A HILL NEAR THE ROAD FROM ROOPNAGAR TO DELHI.

WHY CAN'T WE HAVE AN OPEN ENCOUNTER, RANA?



HOURS LATER —

WE SAW THIS MAN COMING THIS WAY. HE MUST BE A SPY.



DON'T FORGET I WAS A DACOIT. THIS IS THE MOST STRATEGIC POINT IN THESE PARTS. I KNEW YOU WOULD SELECT IT.



I AM GLAD YOU ARE HERE. WHY DON'T YOU JOIN THE ENEMY IN DISGUISE AND CARRY CHANCHAL KUMARI TO SAFETY WHEN WE ATTACK?



I WILL.

IN THE GUISE OF A MUGHAL CAVALIER, MANIKLAL RODE TOWARDS THEIR CAMP.

WELL, MANIKLAL. YOU ARE NOW MAQBUL KHAN — OUT TO MEET THE MUGHAL, MUBARAK KHAN. PLAY YOUR ROLE WELL. YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.



MEANWHILE, AT ROOPNAGAR —

WHY THESE ORNAMENTS, NIRMAL? BEFORE BEING LAID ON THE PYRE ONE IS USUALLY DECKED WITH FLOWERS.



I NEVER DREAMT THE RANA WOULD LET US DOWN LIKE THIS, CHANCHAL.

IF HE DOES NOT COME TO MY RESCUE, I WILL KILL MYSELF BEFORE ENTERING DELHI. THE LOCKET IN THIS NECKLACE CONTAINS POISON.



CHANCHAL! NO! YOU ARE TOO YOUNG TO DIE!

DON'T CRY, NIRMAL. IF CRYING HELPED, I WOULD HAVE FLOODED ROOPNAGAR WITH MY TEARS.



A LITTLE LATER, CHANCHAL PARTED WITH HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

WE ARE HAPPY FOR YOU, MY DAUGHTER. BUT WE'LL MISS YOU.

THEY WON'T SEND ME WITH HER. BUT I'LL MEET HER SOMEHOW.



AS THE PALANQUIN WITH THE PRINCESS LEFT THE PALACE, MUBARAK TURNED TO MANIKLAL, NOW DISGUISED AS A MUGHAL.

MAQBUL, YOU RIDE ALONGSIDE THE PALANQUIN.

THANK GOD, HE COULDN'T SEE THROUGH MY DISGUISE!



THE PROCESSION MOVED ALONG THE ROAD TO DELHI. AS IT NEARED THE HILL ON WHICH THE RANA AND HIS MEN WAITED —

IN THE CHAOS THAT FOLLOWED, MANIKLAL SLIPPED AWAY WITH CHANCHAL, TOWARDS A NARROW RAVINE BETWEEN THE HILLS.



AS SOON AS MANIKLAL AND THE PALANQUIN ENTERED THE RAVINE, A HUGE ROCK FELLED BY THE RANA'S MEN, BLOCKED THE PATH. MUBARAK BECAME SUSPICIOUS.





THEY ARE CARRYING
OFF THE PRINCESS.
AFTER THEM, MY
MEN!

SUDDENLY, AS SOME
HUNDRED SOLDIERS
ENTERED THE RAVINE,
RAJ SINGH AND HIS
MEN CAME CHARGING
DOWN THE HILL.

THEY KILLED ALMOST ALL THE MUGHALS WHO
HAD ENTERED THE RAVINE. LEAVING THE
PRINCESS WITH THE RAJPUTS, MANIKLAL
CAME BACK TO MUBARAK.

LET'S
FALL
BACK.

KHAN SAHAB, I TRIED
TO STOP THEM, BUT
THEY DISAPPEARED
WITH THE PRINCESS.



THEY ARE DOWN
HERE. NOW WE'LL
CLIMB THE HILL
AND USE THEIR
STRATEGY.

I MUST SLIP
OUT AND SOME-
HOW BRING HELP
FOR THE RANA.



MUBARAK LED HIS MEN TO THE TOP OF THE HILL.



MUBARAK AND HIS MEN STOOD READY TO SWOOP DOWN ON THE UNSUSPECTING RAJPUTS.



MEANWHILE —



SUDDENLY —

LOOK, RANA!
THE MUGHALS!

THEY HAVE
BEATEN ME
AT MY OWN
GAME.



IT'S EITHER DEATH OR DEFEAT.
SINCE A RAJPUT NEVER ACCEPTS
DEFEAT, DEATH IT SHALL BE!

YOU SHALL NOT
DIE BECAUSE
OF ME.



AND THE NEXT MOMENT CHANCHAL STOOD BEFORE MUBARAK.

WHO IS THE
COMMANDER OF
YOUR ARMY?

I AM,
MY LADY!
BUT WHO
ARE YOU?



I AM THE PRINCESS OF
ROOPNAGAR. I CANNOT
LET YOU ATTACK THEM
—A MERE FIFTY AGAINST
YOUR TWO THOUSAND.

ONLY
FIFTY
OF
THEM?

YES. THE RANA AND
HIS VALIANT RAJPUTS.
THEY CAME BECAUSE
I APPEALED TO THEM.



I DID NOT WANT TO GO TO DELHI. BUT I HAVE CHANGED MY MIND.

YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND TO SAVE THE RAJPUTS BUT IN VAIN.

AND THE MUGHALS CHARGED FORWARD. BUT CHANCHAL THREW HERSELF BETWEEN MUBARAK AND THE RANA.

YOU'LL HAVE TO KILL ME FIRST.

THUS, WITH A LADY IN BETWEEN, BOTH THE ARMIES WERE FORCED INTO INACTION.

MEANWHILE, MANIKLAL HAD REACHED VIKRAM SINGH'S PALACE AT ROOPNAGAR.

MAHARAJ! WE WERE ATTACKED BY OVER 5000 BANDITS. THEY'VE TAKEN THE PRINCESS. WE NEED MEN TO RESCUE HER.

I HAVE A THOUSAND CAVALRY READY. TAKE THEM.

AS THEY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF ROOPNAGAR, MANIKLAL WAS SHOCKED TO SEE A YOUNG GIRL LYING ON THE ROAD.

WHO ARE YOU?

I AM NIRMAL — THE PRINCESS' FRIEND. SHE IS ON HER WAY TO DELHI AND I WANTED TO BE WITH HER.



AS SOON AS HE SAW THE MUGHALS —

THERE GO THE
BANDITS! ATTACK!
KILL THEM.



THE ENTIRE MUGHAL ARMY WAS ROUTED.
MANIKLAL WENT UP TO THE BEWILDERED RANA.

HOW DID YOU ACHIEVE
THIS, MANIKLAL? HOW
DID MY ENEMY, VIKRAM
SINGH, PART WITH HIS
MEN?

I HEARD
MUBARAK PLAN
HIS MOVES. SO
I PLANNED MINE.

AND MANIKLAL TOLD HIM HOW HE HAD TRICKED
VIKRAM SINGH INTO GIVING HIS ARMY.



AFTER ALL, VIKRAM SINGH
CANNOT COMPLAIN. WE DID
SAVE HIS DAUGHTER
FROM THOSE BANDITS!

CONGRAT-
ULATIONS,
MANIKLAL!

NOW THAT THE
FIGHTING IS OVER,
MAY I PRESENT A
VISITOR TO THE
PRINCESS?



MANIKLAL WALKED AWAY AND RETURNED WITH NIRMAL. CHANCHAL WAS DELIGHTED.

NIRMAL!
YOU!

AH, CHANCHAL! I AM THE HAPPIEST PERSON ON EARTH. YOU ARE SAFE AND...AND MANIKLAL WANTS TO MARRY ME.

THE JUBILANT RAJPUTS RETURNED TO UDAIPUR WITH THE TWO GIRLS.

MAHARANA
RAJ SINGH
KI JAI! *

RAJKUMARI
KI JAI!

MEANWHILE, DARIA, WHO HAD KEPT TRACK OF MUBARAK'S MOVEMENTS, CAME TO HIM AS HE LAY UNCONSCIOUS ON THE BATTLEFIELD. WHEN HE CAME TO HIS SENSES —

WHERE AM I ?...
WHO ARE YOU ?...
DARIA!
BUT HOW... ?

NEVER MIND. YOU
MUST NOT TALK
AND TIRE
YOURSELF.


DARIA, YOU
HAVE SAVED MY
LIFE. I'LL NEVER
LEAVE YOU
AGAIN.

A FEW DAYS LATER, MUBARAK WENT BACK TO DELHI WITH DARIA. ZEB-UN-NISA GOT THE NEWS FROM ONE OF HER INFORMERS.



DRIVEN BY JEALOUSY, ZEB-UN-NISA PLANNED TO KILL MUBARAK.





I'LL CRUSH
THAT IMPUDENT
FOOL AND HIS
RACE.

AND
MUBARAK?

HE TOO
SHALL
DIE!

THAT EVENING ZEB-UN-NISA GAVE ORDERS THAT
MUBARAK SHOULD DIE OF SNAKE BITE.

BUT THE NEXT DAY —

I HAVE CHANGED
MY MIND. I WANT
HIM ALIVE.

IT'S TOO
LATE ...

...I HAVE
JUST BURIED
HIM.

YAH ALLAH!
WHY WERE YOU
IN SUCH A
HURRY?

DIG UP THE
BODY AND
FETCH THE
HAKIM.
HE HAS
THE AN-
TIDOTE.

MEANWHILE —

LOOK! SOMEONE IS
COMING THIS WAY. QUICK!
LET'S RUN AWAY.

IT WAS MANIKLAL ON HIS WAY TO UDAIPUR.

MANIKLAL CAME NEAR THE GRAVE AND UNCOVERED THE FACE OF THE CORPSE.

OH, IT IS MUBARAK!
HE HAS BEEN BITTEN
BY A SNAKE. LUCKILY
I HAVE THE
ANTIDOTE
WITH ME.

A FEW HOURS LATER MUBARAK OPENED
HIS EYES.

WHO ARE... I THINK
I KNOW YOU.
AREN'T YOU
THE RANA'S
MAN?

YES, I AM.
BUT HOW
DID YOU
GET
BITTEN?

I'LL TELL YOU LATER, MY
FRIEND! NOW, TAKE ME
WITH YOU. I CANNOT GO
BACK TO
DELHI.

AT UDAIPUR, MANIKLAL DID NOT
TELL THE RANA ANYTHING
ABOUT HIS ENCOUNTER WITH
MUBARAK. INSTEAD —

THE EMPEROR HAS
THREATENED TO ATTACK.
HE IS BENT ON TAKING
THE PRINCESS TO DELHI.

HER FATHER HAS
WRITTEN THAT TO
SAVE HIM AND ALL
THE RAJPUTS FROM
AURANGZEB'S
WRATH, I SHOULD
RETURN CHANCHAL.

BUT HOW
CAN I? SHE
HAS SOUGHT
MY PROTEC-
TION. BESIDES...

...I DON'T
WANT TO
RETURN HER.
I WANT TO
MARRY HER.

MEANWHILE, AURANGZEB SET OUT WITH HIS ENTIRE ARMY TO CRUSH UDAIPUR. ACCORDING TO THE MUGHAL CUSTOM, THE MEMBERS OF THE PALACE FOLLOWED THE CAVALRY. THEN CAME THE SUPPLIES IN COVERED CARTS.



TO ENTER UDAIPUR THEY HAD TO PASS THROUGH A NARROW HILLY TRACK.

LOOK! RAJ SINGH'S ARMY IS WAITING UP THERE.

WE'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER ROAD TO UDAIPUR.

WE DARE NOT PROCEED ON THIS ROUTE!

A MUGHAL TRADER JUST SHOWED ME AN UNUSED PATH. IT'S NARROW, BUT SAFE—THE RAJPUTS DON'T KNOW OF IT.

THEN BE QUICK! LEAD THE WAY!



AS SOON AS THE MUGHAL ARMY ENTERED THE RAVINE, RAJ SINGH'S TROOPS DESCENDED ON IT CUTTING IT OFF FROM THE WOMEN AND THE SUPPLIES. THE MUGHAL TRADER HAD BEEN NONE OTHER THAN MUBARAK IN DISGUISE.





SEIZE ALL
THE
SUPPLIES.

AND DON'T FORGET
THE GIRLS' REQUEST,
MAHARANA! UDIPURI
AND ZEB-UN-NISA
ARE TO BE SENT
TO THEM.

THE RANA HAD NOT FORGOTTEN. A FEW MINUTES LATER—



RANA, WE HAVE
BROUGHT THE
BEGUM AND THE
SHAHZADI.

GOOD! SEND THEM
TO UDAIPUR. WE STILL
HAVE A LOT TO DO.



THE RAJPUTS BLOCKED BOTH ENDS
OF THE RAVINE WITH HUGE BOUL-
DERS AND ROCKS.

ALAMGIR MAY
HAVE TO SPEND
THE REST OF
HIS LIFE THERE.

A LITTLE LATER —
I AM INDEBTED TO
YOU, MUBARAK.
ALAMGIR WOULD
NEVER HAVE
BELIEVED A
HINDU.

YOU SHOULD THANK
MY SAVIOUR, MANIK-
LAL. I DID IT FOR
HIM.

BUT TRAITOR
THAT I AM,
I HAVE NO
RIGHT TO
LIVE.

SPEND A FEW
DAYS AT UDAIPUR.
PERHAPS YOU
MAY CHANGE
YOUR MIND.

MEANWHILE, AT UDAIPUR —

THIS SHOULD
HUMBLE YOU. A FIT
PUNISHMENT FOR
ONE WHO WOULD
HUMILIATE OUR
DELICATE
PRINCESS!

NIRMAL, LET US FORGIVE
HER. AFTER ALL, SHE IS
THE WIFE OF THE
EMPEROR.

LATER, WHEN THE VICTORIOUS
RAJPUTS RETURNED HOME,
MANIKLAL ARRANGED A MEETING
OF MUBARAK WITH ZEB-UN-NISA.

MUBARAK! AM I DREAM-
ING! YOU WERE DEAD.
BUT DEAD OR ALIVE LET
ME CONFESS THAT
I LOVE YOU.

SO THE
SHAHZADI
DEIGNS TO
LOVE A COM-
MONER.

BUT I STILL LOVE YOU,
ZEB — IN SPITE OF
ALL YOU DID.

THE NEXT DAY —

MAHARANA, IF YOU WANT TO REWARD MUBARAK, GIVE HIM ZEB-UN-NISA.

I CANNOT COMPEL A WOMAN TO MARRY ANYONE. NOT EVEN IF SHE IS MY PRISONER.

THEY WERE MARRIED LAST NIGHT. THEY LOVE EACH OTHER. SO THE QUESTION OF COMPUSSION DOESN'T ARISE.

THE EMPEROR IS SURE TO ASK FOR A TRUCE. LET US AGREE ONLY IF HE RECOGNISES THIS MARRIAGE.

A GOOD IDEA! IN FACT I'VE JUST RECEIVED HIS REQUEST THROUGH A CARRIER PIGEON.

TWO DAYS LATER —

UDIPURI, ZEB AND MUBARAK HAVE GONE BACK TO DELHI. I CONCLUDED A TRUCE WITH THE EMPEROR AND SET HIM FREE.

AT LAST THERE WILL BE PEACE.

BUT THE PEACE DID NOT LAST LONG. ONE DAY —

THE EMPEROR HAS DECIDED NOT TO HONOUR THE TREATY. HE HAS SENT HIS GENERAL DILER KHAN TO ATTACK US.

WE WILL GIVE A FITTING REPLY. BUT FIRST WE MUST WIN THE OTHER RAJPUT KINGS OVER TO OUR SIDE.

A FEW DAYS LATER —

I AM PUZZLED BY VIKRAM SINGH'S REPLY. HE SAYS, HE WILL BE COMING WITH HIS ARMY. NOT A WORD MORE!

PERHAPS HE IS COMING FOR HIS DAUGHTER.

THE NEXT DAY, VIKRAM SINGH SOLANKI RODE INTO UDAIPUR. TO THE RANA'S SURPRISE —

BECAUSE OF YOU NO RAJPUT FEARS THE MUGHALS ANY MORE. I HAVE COME TO HELP YOU.

I AM GRATEFUL. YOU RALLY THE ARMIES FROM OTHER STATES AND FIGHT DILER WHILE I CONFRONT THE EMPEROR.

THE COMBINED RAJPUT FORCES LED BY MANIKLAL AND VIKRAM SINGH DEFEATED DILER IN AN OPEN ENCOUNTER. MANIKLAL MET MUBARAK AGAIN.

MUBARAK! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I AM DYING, MY FRIEND. THIS TIME YOU CANNOT SAVE ME.

DARIA... MY FIRST WIFE... SHE SHOT ME... STABBED HERSELF... POOR DARIA... I DECEIVED HER.

I'M SORRY, MUBARAK. MAY GOD PROTECT YOU.



THAT EVENING AT THE RANA'S PALACE —

NOW THAT DILER IS DEFEATED AND THE EMPEROR SUBDUED, WE HAVE SOME IMPORTANT WORK TO FINISH.



IF YOU ARE WILLING, I'D BE HONOURD TO MAKE YOU MY SON-IN-LAW.



THE SAME NIGHT, RAJ SINGH MARRIED CHANCHAL.

WITH THE FIRE AS WITNESS, I OFFER MY DAUGHTER...



SO THE PRINCESS, CHANCHAL KUMARI'S DREAM CAME TRUE. HER OTHER DREAM TOO HAD BECOME A REALITY. AURANGZEB HAD BEEN DEFEATED BY RAJ SINGH. HE NEVER CAME BACK TO UDAIPUR AGAIN.

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